



RECEIVED

JAN 13 2004

TC 1700

RESPONSE

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as having been anticipated by Uemura. The applicants have cancelled claim 1 and added claims 7 and 8 with claim 8 having the same elements and limitations as did claim 1. The applicants respectfully contend that Uemura teaches a carbon fiber on which is a ceramic layer forms a coat on the carbon fiber. Hafnium carbide forms the preferred carbide ceramic layer. The applicants also respectfully contend that the ceramic fiber of claims 7 and 8 contains hafnium carbide and it is not a carbon fiber coated with a ceramic layer.

The applicants now believe that their application is in condition for allowance and request a speedy action to that end.

Dated: December 29, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

W. Edward Johansen
Registration No. 26,744

BEST AVAILABLE COPY